



Higher Education and Science Future(s): Trends, Imaginaries, and Alternatives

CHER 36th Annual Conference

Supporting The Adaptation of European Quality Indicators and Guidelines for
Effective Higher Education Provision

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University of Luxembourg, Campus Belval, 4th September 2024



Co-funded by
the European Union



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BACKGROUND

INAPP is a **Public research Institute, under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour**, carrying out studies, research, monitoring and assessment of public policies in labour, education and training, social protection, active and passive labour policies, third sector, social inclusion, and policies having an impact on the labour market.

INAPP hosts the **Italian EQAVET National Reference Point (NRP)**, established in Italy, in 2006. The Italian NRP promotes a **Steering Committee (National Board)** which includes delegates from the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education, the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces, the Social Partners as well as training experts and representatives of Italian VET providers.

The Italian NRP **promotes the application of the EU Recommendations** and supports the national process for the implementation and development of a National QA system in VET, through the dissemination of a technical-scientific QA culture and the circulation of practices and tools for the adoption of a continuous improvement process.

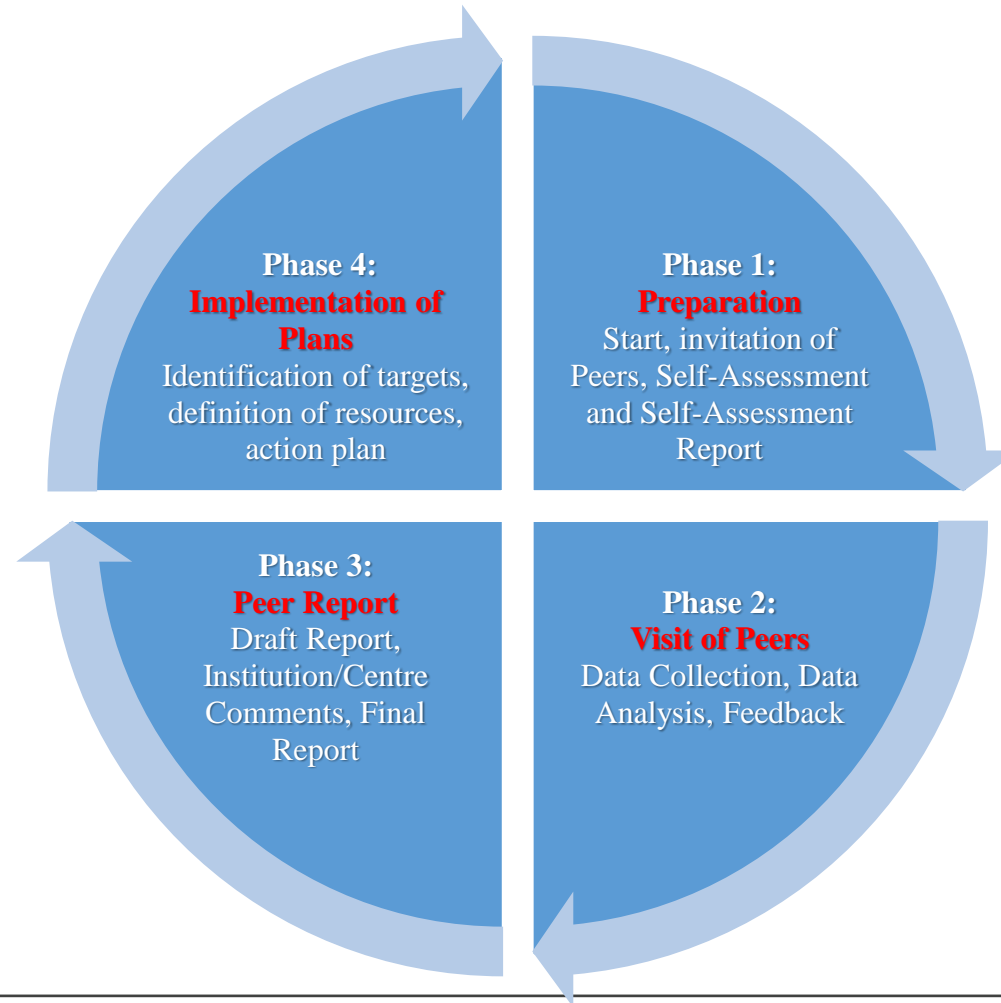


European VET Recommendation 2020 – the relevance of self-evaluation

A Quality Assurance National Reference Point for vocational education and training brings together all relevant stakeholders at national and regional levels to:

- take concrete initiatives to implement and further develop the EQAVET Framework;
- inform and mobilise a wide range of stakeholders, including Centres of Vocational Excellence, to contribute to implementing the EQAVET framework;
- **support self-evaluation as a complementary and effective means of quality assurance to allow the measurement of success and the identification of areas for improvement**, including with respect to digital readiness of VET systems and institutions;
- participate actively in the European network for quality assurance in vocational education and training;
- provide an updated description of the national quality assurance arrangements based on the EQAVET Framework;
- engage in EU level Peer Reviews of quality assurance to enhance the transparency and consistency of quality assurance arrangements, and to reinforce trust between the Member States.

Self-assessment is a crucial step in the 4 phases of the Peer Review of an Education or Training provider:



Peer Review has been:

- used as a long tradition in the evaluation of research (Handbook for academic review, 2000);
- adapted for use in other areas which call for the assessment and development of professional activities;
- implemented in professional contexts when knowledge and expertise in a particular field of work are essential for an adequate evaluation (European Peer Review Association, 2015).

What is a Peer Review of an Education or Training provider? “A Peer Review of a provider is an **evaluation** carried out by **Peers** (in total 4), i.e., colleagues working in similar institutions or environments, who participate in a **Peer Review visit** at the premises of a Peer Review host which is the organization evaluated by the Peers. For the Peer Review, the evaluated organization will prepare a **Self-Assessment Report**, as basis for the Peers’ evaluation, and the Peers will draft the Final **Peer Review Report** (EQAVET, 2021)”.

“The European Peer Review methodology as set down in the European context of the EQAVET network is a **mix of internal and external evaluation** (Fonzo, Evangelista, 2023) and a **procedure for quality assurance** in Vocational Education and Training systems in various European countries (European Commission, 2022) - among which Italy is included”.



More than 20 years ago, in Italy, started the **National experimentations** about PR and self-assessment:



The National Network, Phase I
2010 experimentation
ESF – NOP Convergence and Competitiveness
of the MLSP in collaboration with the Ministry
of Education, University and Research

The National Network, Phase II
2012-2013 experimentation
ESF - NOP Convergence and
Competitiveness of the MLPS

2019-2022 Experimentation
National Operational Programme
SPAO, with the contribution of
the European Social Funds (ESF)
2014-2020



Supporting the implementation of the **European QA Reference Framework** and the use of **Quality Areas**:

Quality Area 1: Curricula

Quality Area 2: Learning and teaching

Quality Area 3: Assessment

Quality Area 4: Learning results and outcomes

Quality Area 5: Social environment, access and diversity

Quality Area 6: Management and administration

Quality Area 7: Institutional ethos and strategic planning

Quality Area 8: Infrastructure and financial resources

Quality Area 9: Staff allocation, recruitment and development

Quality Area 10: Working conditions of staff

Quality Area 11: External relations and internationalisation

Quality Area 12: Social participation and interactions

Quality Area 13: Gender mainstreaming

Quality Area 14: Quality management and evaluation

Supporting the implementation of the **European Framework** and the use of **Quality Indicators**:

Quality Indicator 1: Relevance of quality assurance systems for training providers

Quality Indicator 6: Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace

Quality Indicator 2: Investment in training of teachers and trainers

Quality Indicator 7: Unemployment rate according to individual criteria

Quality Indicator 3: Participation rate in training programmes

Quality Indicator 8: Prevalence of vulnerable groups

Quality Indicator 4: Completion rate in training programmes

Quality Indicator 9: Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market

Quality Indicator 5: Placement rate in training programmes

Quality Indicator 10: Schemes used to promote better access to training and provide guidance to (potential) learners/students

In 2022, the EQAVET network carried out a **survey of the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training Framework**, involving the National Reference Points.

This survey is carried out **on a regular basis** to collect information on the multi-annual trends in the implementation of the EQAVET Framework. The results are presented against survey responses in 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2018 to show trends and the direction of travel in the implementation of the EQAVET framework.

In 2022, the survey collected information from **all EU27 countries** (including separate responses from Belgium-fr and Belgium-nl); **four EFTA countries** (Norway, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Iceland); and **seven EU candidate Countries or potential candidates** (Albania, Turkey, Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo).

The survey received **34 responses**, including 26 respondents from 25 EU27 countries, two EFTA countries (Norway and Iceland) and six of the EU candidate Countries or potential candidates.



- The use of the **EQAVET framework has changed** since the 2018. This is perhaps unsurprising, as over 10 years since the introduction of the recommendation it is likely that those countries that had an **interest and willingness to incorporate EQAVET indicators into their QA systems** have already done so, and other countries are using the EQAVET indicators at the level they feel is necessary.
- However, there has been an **increase in the coverage of the national QA systems** used by EU27 countries since 2018 (from Initial to Continuous until Higher Education).
- In addition, the use of a **common QA approach at provider-level** that used the EQAVET framework has increased.
- The use of **quality standards is relatively common**, with around three-quarters of countries having **quality standards and procedures for accrediting providers** and around half of countries have an external review system in place.



- The **EQAVET framework** continues to be used more widely from Initial to Higher Education. The gap between education sectors appears to be decreasing. This is a positive development as it shows QA systems are now being applied more widely to different education providers.
- **There is little evidence of how EQAVET is being used in specific programmes** (traineeships, work-based, exchanges, etc.). In the few questions where this is asked, the use of EQAVET in these areas appears limited. This could potentially be an area of further exploration moving forward.
- The **use of stakeholders in QA systems are relatively common** across provider-level and system-level QA. The most commonly involved stakeholders are education providers and employers. The least commonly involved are Higher Education Institutions.
- At a system level, **EQAVET framework** is far more commonly used **in the planning and implementation stage than in review and evaluation**. It is also more commonly used in Initial education than Higher education and training.



Overall, the **results from the EQAVET 2022 survey and our desk research** show that there continues to be strong support and **use of quality indicators and guidelines in both the EU27 and beyond**. As such, the situation is evolving as 2018.

There is relatively strong leadership of “**quality management**” and “**quality control**”, such as the **quality cycle and use of quality indicators and criteria**, are used nearly universally.

The use of quality indicators and areas are **quite common** but **the number and type that are used continues to vary considerably by country**. This suggests that countries use those that they feel are most relevant to their national or provider-level Quality Assurance system.

There are clearly **some quality indicators and devices (such as accreditation and EGS of Higher Education institutions)** which are **more commonly used** than others.

Indicators are more and more used **at a system-level to encourage greater alignment and transparency between countries**, and **at a provider-level to ensure that guidelines can and are being fulfilled consistently across institutions**.





THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION !

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